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KCTCS ends tenure for new faculty

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VERSAILLES — The Kentucky Community and Technical College System's governing board voted Friday to abolish tenure for all new faculty members.

Under the policy, all faculty members hired on or after July 1 will be employed on a contractual basis, without tenure. Tenured teachers already on faculty at the system's 16 schools will not be affected.

The move isn't going down well with many of those teachers. Faculty members from several community colleges turned out at KCTCS headquarters to oppose the new policy, some carrying signs saying "Keep Tenure."

- [Search the KCTCS salary database](#)
- [Panel recommends ending tenure at KCTCS; full board to vote Friday](#)

Board of Regents chairman Richard Bean warned them at one point that anyone who stood or held their signs above eye level would be removed from the meeting room.

After the vote, some teachers said they'll now seek intervention from the state legislature in hopes of restoring tenure.

"This is a big blow, but it doesn't mean we're going to give up," said Peggy Cummins, a faculty member from Louisville's Jefferson Community and Technical College.

Tenured teachers essentially are employed for life. Abolishing tenure basically will make it easier for the KCTCS system to lay off teachers whose positions are no longer needed.

According to KCTCS figures, there are 890 tenured employees in the system now, plus 168 on track for tenure, of a total of about 5,000 faculty members statewide.

Of the seven states surrounding Kentucky, only Ohio provides tenure in its community college system,

System officials say the new policy will give community colleges more flexibility during tough economic times. But faculty members maintain that individual community college presidents already have the flexibility to hire new people in either tenured or non-tenured tracks.

Bean told faculty members in the audience, "I believe in you," whether they have tenure or not, promising that their academic freedom will be preserved even without tenure.

However, many teachers say it will now be easier for community colleges to muzzle or fire faculty members who speak out on controversial administration issues.

Four regents voted against ending tenure: Paul Callan, Michael Quillen, Randall Barnes and vice chairman Joseph Wise.

Wise is an executive board member of the Greater Louisville Building and Trades Council. Barnes is a community college student. Callan and Quillen are community college faculty members.

"It's a very, very sad commentary ... for the system, for the students, for the commonwealth of Kentucky," said John Sistarenik, another faculty member from Jefferson County. "Power wants to be absolute. They feel threatened by the fact that somewhere, someplace, someone may actually get tenure."

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